



Polish soldiers, from left, Lt. Tomasz Rostowski, Warrant Officer Tomasz Puszczewicz and Lance Cpl. Aleksander Sowa raise their flag at the Polish contingent change of command ceremony April 10 at Bagram Airfield.

Photo by Army Spc. James H. Tamez 19th Public Affairs Detachment

Cover: An Afghan woman is helped by an ISAF service member during a combined medical, dental and veterinary civil action program in Balkh

Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry 19th Public Affairs Detachment

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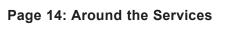
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## ANA, Task Force – 76 leaders discuss security

Combined Joint Task Force - 76 Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan -- The commanding general of the Coalition's Combined Joint Task Force – 76 visited the Afghan Ministry of Defense today at the invitation of the Afghan National Army's chief of staff.

Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley and ANA Gen. Bismullah Khan sipped tea in Khan's office while discussing security in Afghanistan.

The ANA and Afghan National Police force have enjoyed good cooperation and coordination with NATO and Coalition forces, Khan said. But, recognizing that the international community's attention is now focused on Afghanistan, he stressed the importance of seizing what he termed a "golden opportunity" to shape his nation's future.

"In the past four years, we

have had many successes, and much progress has been made, but more work remains," he said.

Khan and Freakley identified insurgents in Afghanistan as a threat to not just the country, but to Coalition forces, Pakistan and the entire world. The continuing series of meetings involving Afghan, Coalition and Pakistani military representatives will be important to defeating the insurgents, they agreed.

"The way we are going to solve this problem is if practical military men from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Coalition work together to defeat this common enemy," Freakley said.

Referring to a map of Afghanistan, the generals reflected on the growth and increased capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces.

Freakley spoke of the



Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, left, meets with Afghan National Army Gen. Bismullah Khan on April 9 at the Afghan Ministry of Defense headquarters in Kabul. Freakley is commanding general of the Coalition's Combined Joint Task Force – 76, and Khan is the ANA chief of staff.

"excellent coordination and cooperation" that is occurring between Coalition and Afghan forces, at the company level, in Regional Command East.

As the meeting ended, Khan expressed his desire to visit Freakley at the Combined Joint Task Force – 76 headquarters at Bagram Airfield. He also thanked Freakley for the contributions of Coalition forces in Afghanistan .

"The people of Afghanistan will never forget your help," he said.



## of the week

### Are you hungry?

#### Dar

Aya shuma gurisna hasted? (Eye-yah shoo-mah goor-ees-nah hah hah-stayed?)

#### Pachtu

Taso wazha ye? (Tah-soh wah-ja yay?)

Afghan bread comes from slabs or in round flat loaves (not to be confused with the now commonly sold Middle Eastern pita bread) that have been baked in large clay ovens called tandoors. Afghan bread is generally available in Middle Eastern grocery stores and in mainstream grocery stores in cities with large Afghan populations.

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## Football players tour Afghanistan, visit troops

By Army Spc.
James Tamez
19th Public Affairs Detachment
BAGRAM AIRFIELD,
Afghanistan -- Hundreds of
service members came to the
Pat Tillman Center here to
receive autographs and have
pictures taken with three
National Football League play-

The NFL stars were on a United Service Organizations tour visiting service members throughout the region.

ers April 4.

"I think it's tremendous to have the opportunity to come out here and visit the men and the women of the armed forces," said Max Starks of the Pittsburgh Steelers. "Getting the chance to come see them and talk with them and get a feel for what it is like out here ... is tremendous. I can't say enough."

Starks said he has three fami-

ly members currently serving in the military, two in the Army and one in the Air Force. He said taking these types of trips helps him to better understand and appreciate what they do that much more.

"The chance to come and spend time with the Soldiers in parts of the world I would never be able to see was just too good to pass up," said Patrick Kerney of the Atlanta Falcons. "The experience that I've had from meeting these guys will certainly help me through many a long day."

Kerney said he always had a deep admiration for service members. "I had a ton of respect for all troops going into this," Kerney said. "Just realizing that the troops are doing this day in and day out and doing it fearlessly is just incredible and inspirational."

Service members seemed



Professional football players Bryce Fisher, Patrick Kerney and Max Starks sign autographs at the Pat Tillman Center at Bagram Airfield on April 4.

equally impressed with the warriors of the gridiron.

"I'm kind of in disbelief," said Army Pfc. Matthew Meyrose, a combat engineer with the 1st Battalion. 32nd Infantry Regiment. "It's refreshing to hear that people

still care about what we are doing and why we are doing it. To take the time out of their schedules and say, 'Thank you, and we appreciate what you guys are doing,' that's something. It means a lot to me."

See VISIT Page 5



Students assemble for opening ceremonies at the new Patan Girls Primary School in Paktia Province on April 5. Before the school was built – with \$10,000 in Coalition funds – the girls attended classes outdoors.

### Provincial, Coalition authorities open school for girls

**Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan Public Affairs BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Provincial and
Coalition officials attended a ceremony opening a school for girls in Paktia Province on April 5.

Classes have begun at the recently constructed Patan Girls Primary School in the village of Patan. More than 300 girls are learning science, math, religion, history, language and drawing from female instructors at the school, which was built with \$10,000 from the Coalition's Commander's Emergency

Response Program fund.

Before the school was built, the girls studied under a tree.

Chamkani District has 15 schools, 11 of which have female students. In addition, the Afghan Women's Educational Center runs 35 satellite schools in the district's villages, educating 931 girls.

Classes also started recently at the Samina Akbari Chamkani Girls School in Chamkani District, Paktia Province. That school was built with funds from a nongovernmental organization.

### VISIT, from Page 4

Sacrificing his time to visit troops is nothing compared to the sacrifices service members make everyday, said Bryce Fisher of the Seattle Seahawks.

"When you are wearing the uniform and serving for the armed services of this country, that there is a real thing," he said. "They put us in armor when we started heading out this way. It gave us all the feeling that these guys and girls are something special."

Fisher, who attended the Air Force Academy and serves as the public affairs officer for the Washington Air National Guard, said he feels he has a special connection with the troops. He said he has had the opportunity to reacquaint himself with some people he went to school with and, in one case, to speak with an Airman who was once under his command.

"The way I look at it is that I



Professional football players Max Starks, center, and Patrick Kerney sign autographs for a member of their flight crew after arriving at Bagram Airfield on April 3.

graduated from the Air Force Academy, so I'm an Airman first," Fisher said. "I understand the training and the necessary preparedness these guys go through. And they are

doing it, I feel, for myself and my family and my daughters." Starks, too, had a few words of encouragement for American service members serving around the world. "I just want to say God bless America and thank you to the troops," Starks said. "We support you ... in all that you do. We hope you come home safely."

### **Enduring Voices**

### What is your greatest hope for the Afghan people?



Army Pfc. Robert Arredondo Mazar-e-Sharif

"That they will take what we've taught them and apply it to better their situation."



Army Sgt. Logan Tisler Mazar-e-Sharif

"I hope they will continue to grow economically and educationally."



Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Lacour Panjshir Province

"That they learn to trust Americans and other nations that are here to help them so one day they can take care of themselves."



Army Sgt. 1st Class Peter Hill Mazar-e-Sharif

"I hope they will be able to stand on their own two feet, hold their own."

## Plant provides power to Panjshir Province

By Army Pfc. Micheal J. Nyeste 19th Public Affairs Detachment

PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- A micro-hydro power plant on the Panjshir Valley River opened in the village of Shigha in the Panjshir Province on April 6.

The Shigha micro-hydro plant was built to enhance the infrastructure of the village and the Panjshir Province as a whole, said Army Maj. Paul Johnson of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team.

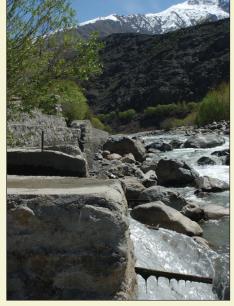
"What we're trying to do is develop an infrastructure that allows the people of this province to live, work and grow with more prosperity," Johnson said.

The plant and the electricity it produces are integral to the development of Afghanistan's infrastructure and the future of its people, he said.

The plant generates 40-kilowatthours of electricity. This will provide power for the local hospital and provincial district offices during the day, and to the villagers in their homes at night, Johnson said.

"Generating electricity has all kinds of positive byproducts. It allows people to work at home. It allows children





to study at night. In some ways, it's the first step toward a broader development," said Fletcher Burton, a state department representative for the Panjshir PRT.

The villagers receive electrical power now, but many were skeptical the plant would ever come to fruition, Johnson said.

Projects for similar plants had been started in Shigha, but they were never completed because of lack of funds or a variety of other reasons.



(Above) Fletcher Burton takes part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of the Shigha micro-hydro plant. Burton is a State Department representative for the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team. (Left) Water flows downstream at the new plant.

However, once the villagers saw this plant was going to be completed, they volunteered to build a nearly 500-footlong retaining wall in front of and past the plant's generator house, Johnson said.

By participating in the building of the micro-hydro plant, the villagers said it proved that Afghans are not only ready to reap the benefits of strong infrastructure, but they are anxious to be instrumental in its development.



(Above) Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team members, Panjshir Province officials, contractors, builders and Shigha villagers sit atop the Shigha micro-hydro plant's generator house during a meal to celebrate the plant's opening. (Left) Two Shigha villagers sit on the intake channel wall after the plant's grand opening.

## ANA graduates first radio operators

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan Public Affairs

**KABUL, Afghanistan** -- The Afghan National Army recently graduated 28 students from its first intermediate-level operator and field-level tactical radio maintenance class at Camp Pol-e-Charkhi.

"Communications provides the critical means for the army to operate, and this training will further develop the capability," said Brig. Gen. Anwar, ANA communications staff officer.

The eight-week training consisted of operator-level training and field-level maintenance. Operator-level training is a nontechnical approach to equipment use and includes various topics such as basic installation and simple fault troubleshooting.

Field-level maintenance goes beyond simple use and focuses on preparing the technician to be a fully skilled repairman. Topics in the field-level maintenance classes included advanced installation, general operational theory, troubleshooting and module replacement.

The class was taught in English, but the ANA soldiers were aided by interpreters and student leaders. They led the class in team exercises, design problems and helped to explain certain fundamentals of the curriculum.

ANA Maj. Gen. Mohammad Mangal, 201st Corps commander, officiated the graduation ceremony. During his



Courtesy p

Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Mohammad Mangal (right) congratulates ANA Col. Fatah for graduating from the intermediate-level operator and field-level tactical radio maintenance class. Fatah also was recognized as an exceptional performer.

remarks, he recognized increasing skills in the ANA, stating that training such as this was indicative of a professional military force. He charged the graduates with the passing along their professionalism to their subordinates.

## Afghan, Coalition forces train together in Jalalabad

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Pintagro Task Force Spartan Public Affairs

JALALABAD, Afghanistan -- Afghan and Coalition forces participated in platoon-level training missions near here April 5, improving their readiness for joint combat operations.

Afghan and Coalition forces regularly conduct such operations to kill and capture insurgents, deny them freedom of movement and hinder their ability to resupply.

About 20 Soldiers of the U.S. Army's 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, joined 30 soldiers from the Afghan National Army's 2nd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 1st

Corps, for the joint training session.

The training marks the early stages of an important long-term relationship, said Capt. James M. McKnight III, commander of the 1-32 Infantry's A Company.

"We're building joint teams, and we'll do our best to keep the same teams operating together in the future," McKnight said.

The Schuylerville, N.Y. native described his Afghan allies as capable and dedicated.

"To date I've been very impressed with their courage, their capability and their commitment," he said.

"The ultimate goal is that the ANA can protect its people and conduct all military operations that need to be conducted," McKnight added. "Our goal is to train ourselves out of a job."

Organizers designed the training to reinforce squadlevel tactical skills, practice coordination among the allied forces and introduce ANA soldiers in the area to their Coalition counterparts.

Learning took place among Afghan and Coalition service members alike, said 1st Lt. James Preston, platoon sergeant for the 1st Platoon of A Company.

"We're just trying to learn from each other," the Chatham, N.J., native said. "A lot of these guys have been fighting their whole lives."

Organizers weighted the

ANA contingent with squad and team leaders to maximize the benefit of the training. Afghan and Coalition participants conducted squad-level movements, with Afghans and Americans taking turns in the lead. They also practiced search procedures.

ANA leaders seemed happy with the training and their relationships with their Coalition partners.

"Everything is valuable for me that I can learn from the Americans," ANA 1st Sgt. Abdull Qare said. "I'd like my whole company to train with them so they can be the best soldiers possible. I want to be side-by-side with these Americans." Page 8 Freedom Watch



A group of Afghan men and boys wait to be seen by Coalition medics April 5 in the Balkh Province.

# Medical community treats

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry 19th Public Affairs Detachment

### BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan

-- American and International Security Assistance Force service members teamed up for a combined medical, dental and veterinary civil action program April 4 - 6 in northern Afghanistan's Balkh Province.

"A lot of folks here were kind of wary of Americans. ... There hasn't been a strong American presence in the north for quite some time. This lets them know that we're still here and we're still working for Afghanistan," said Army Staff Sgt. Ric Miller of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group.

Despite any wariness, more than 2,000 residents of the Stin and Alabad villages put their trust in the program's personnel for the 2 1/2 day operation.

Many of them are suffering from things like stomach problems, or aches and pains from arthritis and malnutrition, Miller said.

The well-stocked pharmacy helped reduce the villagers' ailments by providing vitamins, antibiotics and various other medications.

"Everybody who goes through gets vitamins and anything else the doctor recommends. ... We have a pretty extensive list of medications," Miller said.

Additionally, civil affairs troops handed out gear like hygiene, dental and school kits, blankets, gloves, shoes, clothing, tarps and food.

The people were not the only ones receiving care; hundreds of the villages' cattle, sheep, goats and horses arrived to receive multivitamins and vaccinations.

Soldiers assigned to the Afghan National Army's 3rd Kandak, 209th Corps, were on hand to help keep the entire operation running smoothly.

"The ANA is here to provide security. We also have doctors who are helping our American friends," said ANA Maj.Muhammad Hamayon, operations officer for the 3rd Kandak, 209th Corps.

Hamayon said he hopes his soldiers' participation in the event will inspire other Afghans.

"This is important because we want the locals to see the ANA in action; we want them to come join the ANA," Hamayon said.

"They know we had no Army in the past 20 years, but we do now so we want them to support the government, support the Army," he added.

Miller said he also believes the program was a beneficial experience for everyone involved.

"I was told by the district elder of both these villages that he never realized



Army medic Sgt. Tasha Shaheen, C Co., lungs of an Afghan boy as his father Combined medical, dental and veterinary Afghanistan's Balkh Province.

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# Afghans

Americans would do this for his people. ... He said he was very grateful," Miller said.

"All around, the people are ecstatic we're here. ... It definitely puts a positive face on the Americans, on ISAF and on the ANA," he added.



53rd Logistical Task Force, listens to the looks on. Shaheen was a part of the civil action program April 4-6 in northern



(Top) Air Force Master Sgt. Mike Hamrick, a medic assigned to the 22nd Medical Operations Squadron, listens to the stomach of an Afghan patient April 5. (Bottom) An Afghan Soldier watches a patient drink a bottle of deworming medicine April 5.

Photos by Army Pfc. Anna K.

# Program improves medical care

By Army Spc. Amber Robinson-Sonoda Task Force Spartan Public Affairs

### FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO,

Afghanistan -- The little Afghan girl, adorned in colorful jewelry, peers through sharp black eyes at her new surroundings: the base hospital here. Beside her are Dr. Faiz Muhammad, an orthopedic surgeon at nearby Khost Hospital, and Maj. (Dr.) Douglas Pahl, the chief surgeon at Salerno.

Shasie, 2, who was born with dislocated hips, is here for treatment. Muhammad and Pahl are participants in a new program that encourages cooperation among Afghan and Coalition surgeons and aims to improve the quality of Afghans' medical care.

Muhammad, one of two Afghan surgeons involved so far, has brought many patients into the program. They include gun-shot victims, skin-graft recipients – and Shasie.

"These surgeons have a wealth of knowledge," Pahl said.
"They know as much as we do. They just lack the instruments and, above all, the surgical exposure they need to advance."

The program was conceived by Soldiers from the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based 82nd Airborne Division, which recently departed Afghanistan, and introduced by members of the Fort Benning, Ga.-based 14th Combat Support Hospital unit, which recently arrived.

Eighty percent of its patients are children.

"It's especially good to work with the children," said Capt. Tanya Sanders of Fort Worth, Texas, who is the officer in charge of the operating room. "The families are always so appreciative. Plus it is good to know that we are helping to correct these problems early on so these kids can enjoy a better life sooner."

Several weeks ago, surgeons at Salerno operated on an 11-year-old girl who was suffering from an advanced case of con-



Capt. Tanya Sanders, Maj. Douglas Pahl, an unidentified surgeon and Dr. Faiz Muhammad check the cast they put on a 2-year-old patient's legs March 28 at Salerno Hospital. Sanders, a registered nurse, is officer in charge of the hospital's operating room. Pahl, the hospital's chief surgeon and Muhammad, an orthopedic surgeon, at nearby Khost Hospital, are participants in a cooperative surgery program established here recently.

genital hip dislocation.

"When the hips are allowed to remain in their dislocated state, they try to make a new socket for themselves, causing substan-

See SURGERY Page 11

## Catamounts host Forces Command, Task Force -76

By Army Capt. Joseph Himpelmann Combined Joint Task Force - 76 Command Group

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan -- Soldiers of the Coalition's Task Force Catamount welcomed the commanding general of Army Forces Command to their remote outpost in Paktika Province recently.

Gen. Dan K. McNeill arrived with Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey, also of Army Forces Command; Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, commanding general of the Coalition's Combined Joint Task Force – 76; and more than 4,000 pounds of mail on two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

During his visit, McNeill awarded a

Purple Heart to Army Spc. Phillip King, who was wounded in an improvised explosive device strike Feb. 26, re-enlisted Army Staff Sgt. James Wilson, and promoted Army Maj. Shawn O'Brien to lieutenant colonel.

Like most of the Soldiers in Task Force Catamount, King, Wilson and O'Brien belong to the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, part of the Fort Drum, N.Y.based 10th Mountain Division.

After thanking the Catamounts for their service, McNeill and Freakley visited the aid station here.

As Catamount medics removed a cast from a local boy's arm, McNeill told the father his son seemed to be a strong young man who could help take care of their family. The father beamed with pride.

McNeill and Freakley also visited with members of the base's forward surgical team, who treated a Soldier with the detonator of a rocket-propelled grenade in his abdomen. Using an X-ray and consultating with explosive-ordnance disposal experts, members of the team confirmed the RPG round was live. The surgeon asked for one volunteer to remain in the operating room as his assistant, and then removed the live ordnance.

This operation is credited with saving the life of the Soldier, who is now recovering at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

As the visit ended, Freakley noted the strength of the Catamounts' preparation and determination, and praised them for what he termed their "uncommon valor."

### **SURGERY from Page 10**

tial stretching of the ligaments. We actually have to go in and cut the ligaments and reattach them after we reposition the hip bones," Pahl said.

Because of the frequency of such cases in this area, it is important that surgeons in Khost become familiar with the procedure, he said.

"Hip joint dislocation is actually very common, (but) in most countries the doctors perform a 'hip click exam' that reveals whether the infant has the disorder immediately after birth," Pahl explained.

Afghan midwives, who deliver most babies here, typically are not trained to recognize dislocated hips. As a result, the disorder sometimes is not noticed until a child begins to walk.

"At this point it has gone past a simple fix. It requires surgery," Pahl said.

For Shasie, surgery would have required up to three incisions so Pahl and his team could move her hip bone into its socket. With the girl under anesthesia, however, Pahl rotated the bone, which slipped neatly into its proper position.

# "This will be a slow progression, definitely. But sometimes it's good to be reminded where the beginning is."

## Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Bruce Schooneboom Salerno Hospital

Pahl and Zaiz concluded that surgery would not be necessary. As Shasie's father waited, the surgical team put casts on Shasie's hips and legs. Although when she awakes she will be immobile from waist to foot, in 12 weeks she should be as good as new.

Like Shasie, the cooperative surgery program is a work in progress, said Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Bruce Schooneboom of Washington, D.C., the hospital detachment's commander. Also like Shasie, it may leave a lasting impression.

"This will be a slow progression, definitely," Schooneboom said, "but sometimes it's good to be reminded where the beginning is."

## Mother, son make deployment 'family affair'

By Army Sgt. Angel Stephens 568th Personnel Services Detachment

### KANDAHAR AIRFIELD,

Afghanistan -- Like most young men being deployed in the Army, Pfc. Phillip McEver will be separated from his mother. But instead of being half a world away, mom is only a short C-130 Hercules flight away. Army Sgt. Phyllis Long is stationed here, and McEver, her son, is stationed at Forward Operating Base Salerno. Both are members of the Tennessee Army National Guard's 568th Personnel Services Detachment.

"Most people think it's so awesome," said Long, 50, about being deployed with



Army Pfc. Phillip McEver and his mother, Army Sgt. Phyllis Long, pose for a photo. The pair are deployed to Afghanistan with the 568th Personnel Services Detachment.

her son. She feels blessed to be able to take her loved one with her, even if they aren't in the exact same location.

Long, a native of Hendersonville, Tenn., had been in the military for most of her son's life. Formerly an active-duty Air Force aircraft mechanic and medic, Long left to pursue a nursing career, but joined the 568th PSD to learn a new career field.

When her son approached her about also joining the Guard, Long considered it a good idea.

"I thought it would be a good career move," she said. "The Army teaches discipline and gives a sense of pride."

Joining the 568th PSD wasn't entirely planned. Long did ask McEver what Military Occupational Specialty he wanted.

"I didn't want to start out in a combat MOS, so personnel seemed like a good alternative," McEver, 25, said.

But he didn't mind the possibility of deployment to Afghanistan which both mom and son had been hearing rumors about by the time McEver began basic training. McEver was at advanced individual training when the call actually came.

"I was just fine with it, as long as I was home for Christmas," McEver said.

Long shares her son's positive attitude

about deployment.

"Everybody wants freedom. Well somebody's got to defend it," she said.

While it may sound cool to have a freedom-fighting mom, McEver admits in the beginning he got his fair share of teasing. "Can't go without your mommy?" or "You need your mommy to protect you" were standard quips, he said. But McEver said he doesn't mind too

"Most people think it's a unique opportunity for a family to grow closer," he said.

But being that mom is a noncommissioned officer, certain courtesies are required.

"It's hard for me to call her 'Sgt. Long' instead of 'Mom,'" McEver admits, but doesn't think there's a real conflict of interest since the two were never in the same squad.

And now, not being in the same location, Long knows her situation is different from most moms seeing their sons off to war.

"Moms in the civilian world know there is danger, but they don't sit through briefings to know exactly what happens, or could happen," she said.

Now, Long said she trusts the 568th PSD's leaders in Salerno will protect her son.

# Soldiers become teachers

### Troops try to affect positive change through education

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry 19th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHKIN, Afghanistan -- Sharing knowledge is one way American Soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base Shkin are working to make a difference in the lives of Afghanistan's youth.

Army Spc. Michael Scadden, a linguist assigned to the 7th Special Forces Group, first proposed the idea of an English class for local children to the shura, a meeting of tribal and village leaders, in early February.

"I am a Soldier, but I'm a teacher first," Scadden told the shura. "You are all wise elders, and you know the importance of education for the future of your children."

Scadden, who is a civilian teacher, said he was met with an enthusiastic response.

"I felt very inspired when I spoke to them, and I had a profound effect on them. ... Afterward, they all came forward to speak with (me) and the command about the project," he said.

Within two weeks, Scadden's proposed English class became a reality.

"At first, it was only boys, but then I reminded them the class was for a mix of tribes and boys and girls," Scadden said.

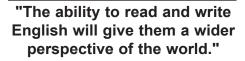
"I was able to drive the point home to



An Afghan girl shows what she's learned in English classes taught by volunteers serving at Forward Operating Base Shkin.

the leadership that girls must be included in these programs ... that education is just as important for them as well," he added.

The classes, which are currently held once a week, are taught by Scadden and two other Soldiers, Spc, Denver Grubb and Pfc. Jorge Elizondo, both assigned to FOB Shkin.



Army Spc. Micheal Scadden 7th Special Forces Group

Although Scadden anticipates leaving the forward operating base in the near future, Grubb and Elizondo will continue to hold the classes.

"My excitement is only diminished by the pending move ... not being able to watch as these kids go from A-B-C to speaking, reading and writing in a language that will open so many doors in their lives," Scadden said.

Grubb and Elizondo agree they are looking forward to expanding Scadden's project.

"I love watching their faces as they learn ... their smiles as they get the simple things down," Grubb said.

"This is a great way to really accomplish something while I am here, to really make a difference in the lives of the Afghans," Elizondo added.

Whether or not Scadden is around to see it, he said he believes everyone involved will benefit from the English classes.

"As a benefit to the Army, the people of the area may become more protective of the Soldiers who are volunteering to participate in this program," Scadden said.

The Soldiers get a sense of purpose from their time here and the satisfaction of knowing they may have made a difference in the lives of these children, he said.

However, it is the Afghans who Scadden said he believes will reap the most bene-

"The ability to read and write English will give them a wider perspective of the world. ... Their horizons will expand, they will have the tools, and from there, the choice is their," he added.

Afghan children recite numbers in English and Dari during a class taught by Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Shkin.





### By Army Sgt. 1st Class Micheal Rautio Joint Logistics Command Public Affairs

-- For the neediest citizens of this mountainous country, humanitarian and relief supplies often arrive in bundles attached to parachutes and dropped from Coalition aircraft to the ground.

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan

Members of the 647th Quartermaster Company, made up of platoons from Fort Bragg, N.C., and Fort Campbell, Ky., have prepared 82 such bundles – with 45 tons of supplies – since arriving here Feb. 12.

They are known as riggers because of their mission: rigging the bundles to parachutes and preparing them to withstand the exit from an aircraft, the descent and finally the impact with the ground.

They also are responsible for making sure they have enough supplies to build each bundle. For a winter bundle, that means blankets, shoes, sugar, stoves and coal; for a survival bundle, that means tool and hygiene kits, beans, rice, cooking oil, salt, tarpaulins and more.

Bundles are built on request, based on when the aircraft will be taking off, explained Army Staff Sgt. Raul Mercado, a rigger deployed from Fort Campbell. Each bundle takes about 20 minutes to build.

"A container delivery system, or CDS, is used to prepare the supplies for the airdrop," explained Army Chief Warrant Officer Cortez Frazier.

The supplies are wrapped up with a cargo harness and secured to a skid board. Once a bundle is secure a parachute is attached to its top.

A regular cargo parachute, 64 feet in diameter, or a high-velocity parachute, 26 feet in diameter, may be used.

The type of chute depends on the durability of the supplies and the size of the drop zone, explained Army Sgt. 1st Class Tommie Selmon, also from Fort Campbell.

Before a bundle is loaded onto an aircraft, it must be inspected by a member



of the aircrew and a member of the rigging team. This "joint air inspection" ensures that the bundles have been rigged properly, Mercado said.

Once a bundle is on an aircraft, the crew and the riggers make sure it can exit the aircraft properly, and then they attach its static line to the anchor line cable. A static line pulls out the pilot parachute, which in turn deploys the main chute, when the bundle leaves the aircraft, Mercado said.

Once a bundle lands safely on target, Coalition troops on the ground break it down and distribute its contents. The parachute and other gear used to drop the supplies will be returned to Bagram to be used on a future mission, Mercado said.

While the riggers of the 647th don't get to see the results of their work, they know they are making a contribution to the rebuilding of Afghanistan, one said.

"It feels real good. I am very confident in everyone doing (his or her) job and everyone is happy to be here," said Army Sgt. Harvey Johnson, from Fort Campbell.

Army Sgt. Harvey Johnson ties a parachute onto a humanitarian-aid bundle at Bagram. Johnson is assigned to the 647th Quartermaster Company.

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## Corpsmen help girls injured by mine

By Marine Sgt. Joe Lindsay Task Force Lava Public Affairs

JALALABAD, Afghanistan -- Coalition corpsmen rushed to the assistance of two girls, 8 and 10, who were

injured when a Soviet-era land mine exploded near here March 31.

The incident occurred when one of the girls picked up the device -- one of millions that litter the Afghan countryside -- and began playing with it.

"The landmine that injured these girls is called a 'toe-popper," explained Navy Lt. Aric Aghayan, battalion surgeon for the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment, deployed to eastern Afghanistan from Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

"The reason it is called a 'toe-popper' is because if you step on one, it will blow off your toes. It is designed to maim its victims. It is very small and doesn't look menacing, but it brings damage and destruction," he said.

Two corpsmen -- Seamen Michael Ewing and Charles Mark -- ran more than a mile to help the girls, and were the first on the scene.

"Both girls were seriously injured, but the older sister was in a more critical state," recalled Ewing, a native of Mount Laurel, N.J.

"We immediately started treating the girls, starting with the older sister," said



Members of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment unload one of two Afghan girls, injured from a land mine, on the Jalalabad Airfield flightline March 31. The girl was flown to Bagram Airfield for treatment.

Mark, from Dinuba , Calif. "We stabilized her and then had her transported back to our medical facility at JAF. From there, the girls were airlifted to Bagram Airfield. They are both going to be OK."

Aghayan, of Shawnee, Kan., praised Ewing and Mark for keeping cool and letting their training come into play.

"It was a great exercise in teamwork," he said. "I am very impressed by these two corpsmen and by the job all our corpsmen have been doing since we got to Afghanistan" in January.

As impressed as he was with Ewing and Mark, it was the elder sister who amazed him, he said.

"The older girl ... was incredibly stoic and brave and kept her cool the entire time," Aghayan said. "Before she was airlifted to Bagram for surgery, she said something to us, which our interpreter translated as, 'God bless you guys for helping me and my sister."

Chief Petty Officer Claude English, the senior enlisted medical department representative for the 1/3 Marines, said the incident could have had a different outcome had the corpsmen not followed their instincts.

"We want to help people who are hurt," said English, himself a corpsman. "It's not just our job -- it's who we are."



An Army CH-47 Chinook crew tries to make contact with Bagram Airfield after an emergency landing near Ghazni.

Photo by Army Spc. Micheal Scadden 7th Special Forces Group

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



Dirt and fragments fly into the air as a 1,100-pound Russian bomb is disposed of 200 feet from the runway at Bagram Airfield on March 30.

# Airmen destroy Russian bomb

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Redente 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

#### BAGRAM AIRFIELD,

**Afghanistan** -- Airmen destroyed a large Russian bomb here March 30.

A 1,100-pound Russian penetrating bomb containing 167 pounds of explosives was recently found 200 feet from the runway by workers clearing mines around the airfield here.

"We blow UXOs in place when it is the safest option for the explosive ordnance disposal team," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Kenneth Roads, a 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group explosive ordnance disposal craftsman.

"Due to the location of the Russian UXO, we took protective measures like ... trenching and dirtmounding to safeguard the runway from being damaged," said Air Force Senior Airman Cory Ahlf, a group EOD journeyman.

The EOD Airmen used C-4 high explosives to blow up the bomb. Fragments were found 800 feet from the point of detonation.

The bomb was a remnant of the Afghan-Soviet War, which took place between 1979 and 1989.





(Above) Air Force Senior Airman Cory Ahlf places blasting caps into C-4 explosive to dispose of an unexploded Russian bomb.

(Left) Ahlf shovels mud to help hold an ammo can covering a C-4 explosive charge in place. Ahlf is assigned to the 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group as an explosive ordnance disposal journeyman.

